United Nations

A/51/PV.52

# General Assembly

Fifty-first Session

*Official Records*

52nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 5 November 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda items 8** *(continued)* **and 17** *(continued)*

**Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

**Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections**

**(a) Election of the members of the International Law Commission**

**Documentation for the election of members of the International Law Commission**

**The President**: This morning the General Assembly will first turn its attention to the question of documentation for the election of members of the International Law Commission.

As announced at our previous meeting, I should like to consult the Assembly on a matter regarding the election of members of the International Law Commission to be held on Monday, 11 November. On that day, the Assembly will proceed to the election of 34 members of the Commission whose term of office is to commence on 1 January 1997. It should be recalled that, in accordance with the statute of the International Law Commission, the Secretary-General communicated to the Governments of Member States, in document A/51/177, the list of candidates submitted within the required time for the submission of nominations — that is, by 1 June 1996. The statements of the qualifications of the candidates are contained in document A/51/178.

Subsequent to that date, the Secretary-General received additional information concerning candidates as well as new candidatures. The names of these new candidates and additional information are to be found in documents A/51/177/Add.1-6 and A/51/178/Add.1.

Under these circumstances, it is necessary for the General Assembly to take a decision as to whether these new candidatures should be accepted in spite of the submission of their names subsequent to the deadline and whether they should be incorporated into a consolidated list of candidates. It has been the practice of the Assembly to incorporate such late submissions into a consolidated list.

If I hear no objection, I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to issue such a consolidated list of candidates.

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: The consolidated list of candidates will be issued as document A/51/653.

96-86712 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

**Agenda item 44** *(continued)*

**Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s**

**Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (A/51/48)**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/228 and Add.1)**

**Draft resolution (A/51/48, sect. IV)**

**Mr. Kiwanuka** (Uganda): Allow me first of all to thank Ambassador Hisashi Owada, Permanent Representative of Japan and Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, for the successful conduct of the review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We also thank the other members of the Bureau — namely the representatives of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Gabon and Guyana — and, indeed, all the delegations whose active participation helped to enliven the debate on African development and thus made an invaluable contribution to the review process.

The social, economic and political circumstances and conditions in which African countries find themselves today, the loaded agenda for international cooperation for development, and the ongoing efforts to define a people-centred and environmentally acceptable road to economic growth and development, among other factors, lend a high degree of complexity to a process such as the one that has just been completed. The outcome of such a process, therefore, will necessarily be a mixed bag that attempts to respond to the expectations of all. It is with these considerations in mind that Uganda welcomes and endorses the outcome of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF.

The conclusion of the mid-term review, in a nutshell, is that UN-NADAF remains largely unimplemented and that the socio-economic conditions that prompted the launching of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development in 1986 and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s have persisted. Nevertheless, there has been some progress towards economic recovery, gross national product growth rates of up to 6 per cent being attained in a handful of African countries. Overall, poverty and unemployment will increase substantially while official development assistance continues to decline in real terms and the debt burden remains unsustainable. While we recognize primary responsibility for our development, a decisive breakthrough, as in the case of most developing countries, depends on a high degree of external support and on a favourable external economic environment.

The New Agenda expires in the year 2001. The most optimistic assessment and projection would have to conclude that it is not possible to deliver on all the commitments undertaken by Africa and the international community in UN-NADAF. The approach of the mid-term review was to identify the key critical areas and to make concrete recommendations on what tangible actions can be undertaken in the five remaining years. We believe this is a practical approach. However, contingent upon the final evaluation in the year 2002, we might have to seriously chart the course beyond this decade.

In doing this, we will have to take due cognizance of the programmes of action of the major international conferences and summits held so far. These global conferences have increased awareness of the fundamental relationships between peace, development, environmental sustainability, social equity and justice as well as between participation, good governance and democracy. Most African countries have accepted these basic paradigms that must inform sustainable development. At the global level, the international community must match this renewed awareness with action consistent with the commitments entered into at the conferences. This is not only a moral imperative, but good common sense in a world that is increasingly without boundaries and in which our destinies are inextricably interlinked.

We applaud the commitment undertaken at the mid-term review to effect urgent measures to accelerate the implementation of UN-NADAF. In order to translate this commitment into programmes, it is necessary to reinvigorate the follow-up arrangements for the implementation of the New Agenda. At the national level, it is necessary that Governments work hand in hand with the United Nations system and the donor community to integrate these undertakings into the country cooperation frameworks. At the regional level, the Economic Commission for Africa must ensure that the undertakings in the areas of subregional and regional cooperation and integration are promoted through essential transport,

communication and trade projects, among others. At the global level, we believe that the enhanced involvement of the Secretary-General in advocacy for African development as well as in the sensitization of the key players — African Governments, the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the trade institutions and the donor community — would definitely give added impetus to the implementation of the New Agenda. Likewise, the contribution of non-governmental actors, an aspect that received deserved attention during the mid-term review, is most welcome.

**Mr. Minoves-Triquell** (Andorra) *(interpretation from French)*: What is happening in Africa? In 1960 the future belonged to it. The energy and pride of the new generation ready to take matters in hand seemed to guarantee an economic and social development that would be worthy of its ancient and numerous peoples. In 1990, social upheaval, AIDS, debt, lack of investment, poverty, unemployment and the decline of the social fabric and of democracy seemed too widespread to be mere side-effects of a development process that was slow to materialize.

The end of apartheid in South Africa seemed to offer a new impetus, together with other events in Africa. I remember how moved I was when that great country resumed its seat in the General Assembly in June 1994 and, speaking on behalf of the Western European and other States, I had the great privilege of welcoming it here.

As my colleague from Canada, Mr. Fowler, pointed out at yesterday afternoon's meeting, in 1996 the recovery of Africa is very much on the agenda. African leaders are increasingly embracing democratic practices; they are aware of the requirements of economic pragmatism to bring their countries out of the tunnel. The time for idealistic optimism is over in Africa; now is the time for optimism driven by will. The time of major programmes and major financing has passed. In Africa now, the time has come for targeted programmes and effective and responsible economic and fiscal policies.

However, the Principality of Andorra, a small State with limited resources, has a feeling of solidarity with Africa. We are very close, just across the Mediterranean. Above all, we are convinced that the development of the world depends on the development of Africa. Shame on humanity if the twenty-first century sees the collapse of Africa. Andorra contributes what it can to the development of the continent. Andorran doctors and nurses are working there in cooperation programmes. Andorran teachers are training young Africans; for example, our Ambassador in Paris, Madame Mateu, has often spoken to me of the years she spent teaching in a high school in Cameroon. Moreover, my country has tried every year to increase its direct assistance for development through the United Nations. And I must not forget the contribution of the Andorran non-governmental organizations dedicated specifically to this.

The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s calls for strengthening education systems by improving basic skills for further learning and expanding educational opportunities for all, particularly girls and women. We might reflect on the fact that in the developing countries, where 84 per cent of the world's population between 15 and 24 years of age lives, more than 100 million new jobs need to be created in the next two decades to absorb the growing numbers of active young people. These young people need to be given the necessary means to contribute to the development of their countries. First of all, they need to be trained for the jobs and professions required to relaunch their countries' economies, which calls for a clear analysis and development strategies at both the State level and also — very important — the local community level. The schools and universities must, then, through their teaching, propagate the primacy of the universal human rights of men and women, as provided in Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the spirit of democracy.

At the Social Summit in Copenhagen, the Principality of Andorra advocated one of the commitments, on dialogue between generations. It considers that a true partnership must be forged between the young and older people in order to ensure that the African heritage is passed on intact and at the same time to foster the ideas that can guide Africa to success in the twenty-first century.

**Mr. Mwakawago** (United Republic of Tanzania): I welcome the opportunity to address the Assembly on the important item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s". The development of Africa has, for the last decade been a preoccupation in the work of this Assembly, from the special session in 1986 which adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) today. While such efforts have been expanded to address Africa's

development problems, the circumstances that led to the adoption of UN-PAAERD and UN-NADAF are as valid today as they were in 1986 and 1991. In fact, social and economic conditions have actually deteriorated over the past decade.

Although Africa faces enormous problems, it has the potential for growth and development. That is why it has embarked on an ambitious reform process aimed at harnessing that potential and in the full recognition that its development is, in the final analysis, its own responsibility. In that regard the continent has seized the challenge and African countries have committed themselves to implement policies and programmes aimed at creating an environment conducive to growth and development. This has enabled Africa to halt the deteriorating trend and in many cases to register modest growth. This is but the beginning, which can only be sustained if there is a supportive international environment in terms of increased financial resources and other mechanisms.

Increased resources are critical if the process of reform and restructuring is to be sustained. We need this particularly because progress in Africa is beneficial not only to the African people. Given the interdependence of the world's economies, the whole of mankind stands to benefit from such progress. This has been duly recognized in the New Agenda. Needless to say, the report of the Ad Hoc Committee for the mid-term review of UN-NADAF which is before us also attests to this point.

We believe that for Africa's development efforts to be meaningful, there is a need for the international community to come together in partnership with Africa to address, in a comprehensive manner, the problems facing the continent and to find lasting solutions. There is also an urgent need to review the determination and commitment to implement UN-NADAF so as to enable Africa to achieve social and economic development goals. In that regard, we welcome the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. We hope that the Initiative will provide an additional impetus for the operationalization of UN-NADAF.

One of the steps that can facilitate the realization of the goals and objectives of UN-NADAF is to address the debt burden of most African countries. Africa's external indebtedness increased from $300 billion in 1991 to $322 billion in 1995, an 8 per cent increase over four years. With such an unsustainable level of external indebtedness, it is obvious that any efforts undertaken to generate capital needed for development will not succeed. Therefore, in addition to the significant steps taken by the creditors to alleviate the debt problem, further measures are necessary to address effectively, and in a comprehensive manner, the problems of heavily indebted low-income developing countries, particularly those in Africa.

As we enter the sixth year of UN-NADAF implementation, the gap between Africa and the developed countries continues to widen. This is manifested in increasing levels of poverty, declining terms of trade, declining levels of official development assistance, lack of progress in the transfer of technology, and, above all, in the downgrading of the issue of development from its priority place on the international agenda. In this context, it is our view that for Africa's development efforts to bear fruit, there is an urgent need to create a conducive international environment that would include a substantial increase in official development assistance.

Commodity trade remains the major source of earnings in all African countries. In this regard, the impact of the implementation of the Uruguay Round — considered a landmark in world trade — on countries in Africa is still ambiguous, particularly in the areas of market access, agriculture and the erosion of preferential treatment for Africa's commodity exports. As we move to implement the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules relating to commodities, there remains a pressing need, at least in the transitional stage, to safeguard the preferential treatment that Africa enjoyed under the Lomé Convention. This would enable Africa to adjust to economic diversification, which it must do if it is to build its competitiveness in world markets.

The forthcoming ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization, scheduled for December 1996 in Singapore, will be another opportunity to monitor and review the Uruguay Round's impact on countries in Africa. The Singapore meeting should not, therefore, be used to address new issues. While some of these issues may be legitimate, we believe that there are other competent bodies within the United Nations system that can address them more comprehensively than the rule-setting mechanism of the WTO. We therefore hope that the Singapore meeting will be allowed to devote full attention to the review of the implementation process of the Uruguay Round agreements.

This is all the more necessary when we consider that Africa's efforts to restructure and reform governmental laws and procedures in order to attract more foreign

direct investment have not borne fruit. Indeed, the argument that shortfalls in official development assistance have been compensated for by increased foreign direct investment flows to developing countries has not held true in the case of most African countries.

By and large, Africa lacks the resources needed to undertake all the necessary restructuring and build an infrastructure that can attract and support sustained flows of foreign direct investment. Even in the rare cases where such infrastructure has been instituted, foreign direct investment has not been forthcoming, at least not at a rate and levels that could have a positive impact and enable Africa to make an economic turnaround. This is due partly to the hesitancy of investors to venture into new and untested markets, notwithstanding the statistical fact that the level of return on investments in Africa is one of the highest. But this hesitancy could be a result of deep-seated prejudices engendered by the propaganda that Africa is a continent in which instability and conflict are endemic. In some cases, conflicts have plagued individual African countries. But these are very few.

We therefore hope that it will be possible for Africa's development partners to assist in supporting UN-NADAF, both in the mobilization of the resources needed to set up the investment-sustaining infrastructure and in the sensitization process, and to cast away the negative images that stand in the way of increased flows of foreign direct investment.

In conclusion, last September the General Assembly, through its Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole and under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Owada, concluded the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The outcome of this review reveals that many of the critical social and economic problems that led to the adoption of UN-NADAF in 1991 still exist. In some countries, the problems have worsened. The estimated resource mobilization levels in UN-NADAF are still far from being attained, and key development goals have yet to be met. In this regard, the mid-term review of the New Agenda reaffirms and underscores the mutuality of commitments and the need for Africa and the international community to take urgent and concrete action, as recommended in the review.

The New Agenda is a framework for global partnership that needs our collective political will to work. We believe that with greater political will and determination, the recommendations contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole will be implemented.

**Mrs. Cornette** (Guyana): My delegation was pleased to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which met in September this year to examine the progress made under the Agenda and to determine the actions that need to be taken for the remainder of the decade. The Committee was fortunate to have as its Chairman His Excellency Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan, whose diplomatic experience and skills were in large measure responsible for the successful completion of a most engaged exercise.

The report of the Committee that is before us is testimony to the hard work, dedication and spirit of compromise of all the parties concerned — the African countries and the international community. Inevitably, the outcome in such circumstances is less than all may have wished. Nonetheless, the review does provide a solid basis for the accelerated implementation of the New Agenda and for strengthening the spirit of partnership and shared responsibility that has imbued it from the start. The task before us, however, is far from easy. As the review Committee itself has underlined, many of the critical social and economic problems that led to the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development in 1986 and of the New Agenda in 1991 still exist and, in some countries, have even worsened.

To cite but one example of the challenges that lie ahead, it is reported that unless decisive action is taken to address the issue of food security, an estimated 700 million to 800 million people worldwide will remain chronically food-deprived by the year 2010. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, the number of people so affected is expected to rise to 300 million, or over half the total population of that region. The obstacles to food security are said to include inadequate agricultural production, high levels of population growth, limited resources and high rates of poverty and unemployment — all of which are expected to increase in sub-Saharan Africa — and budgetary constraints that adversely affect the development of physical infrastructure.

As we have done on previous occasions, my delegation urges a strong response from the international community that is commensurate with Africa's efforts to

secure full food security. The timely opportunity of the World Food Summit, to be held in Rome later this month, to pledge full commitment to eliminating hunger from the continent should not be lost. Renewed international support is also critical in other areas of the Agenda, such as resource flows, external debt and trade, in order to achieve the broad objectives of the Agenda and the integration of Africa into the world economy.

My own country, Guyana, has long been pledged to supporting Africa's efforts of economic recovery and development. This solidarity with the African people is born of the belief not only that they deserve our cooperation but also that their circumstances affect all of us in the developing world. We therefore stand on the side of African States in their current economic difficulties because we understand, and to a great extent share, some of the difficulties they now confront.

The assessment of UN-NADAF, which was completed last September, afforded all countries, developed and developing, the opportunity to look in a balanced manner at ways in which their interests can be harmoniously reconciled for the benefit of both. It enabled us to reflect on the policies not only of Governments but also of the international institutions which give them advice. Donors and recipients together examined the adequacy and effectiveness of official development assistance. Equally, we attempted to measure the contribution that non-governmental organizations make in the development process, and sought to encourage them to take further initiatives of support.

As we counselled then, we submit once again that it is advisable that we listen to Africa's own views on the implementation of the New Agenda. We believe the African people are the best judges of the situation and are therefore most able to say what else needs to be done. On the basis of this approach and a frank, constructive analysis of the records, we have striven to recognize the positive achievements, to demonstrate the courage to admit our failures and to devise new strategies for accomplishing our goals. Having identified these obstacles, which continue to frustrate progress, and wherever possible having made firm recommendations for overcoming them, we must now swiftly implement the actions necessary to give effect to those recommendations.

The deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, almost immediately in the wake of the review is a welcome development. Full support by the international community is essential in order to operationalize its provisions. I am pleased to announce that right now my own Government is positively considering early accession to the Convention. We also welcome the recent initiative of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to deal with the burden of heavily indebted poor countries, and urge its expeditious and flexible implementation.

May I say in closing that UN-NADAF is linked to the broader Agenda for Development which we are in the process of negotiating. The lessons drawn from the review will benefit not only Africa but the entire international community. We must now turn our full attention to the expeditious implementation of the New Agenda. With renewed effort, we believe that the African predicament can be significantly alleviated, if not solved, by the end of the next decade.

**Mr. Diagne** (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): We are gathered here once again to discuss the economic situation in Africa, but one must wonder what there is to be said or done. This being a debate on the development of Africa, the delegation of Senegal considers that everything, or practically everything, has already been said. The analysis has been made, the goals have been set and the means to achieve them have been identified. More than ever before, the time for professions of faith is definitely behind us; the time has come for action.

Only a few weeks ago, the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) allowed us to measure the remarkable progress achieved by African countries at the political, economic and social levels to create and strengthen the conditions necessary for sustained economic growth and sustainable development in the continent. This progress is all the more significant as it has taken place at an accelerated pace over a relatively short period of time and despite an international economic environment that is unfavourable in many respects.

While Africa has done everything possible to meet its commitments since the establishment of UN-NADAF, the facts show that the international community has yet to shoulder its part of the responsibilities under UN-NADAF. Whereas a minimum of $32 billion was required to implement the programme, official development assistance, paradoxically, has fallen to all-time lows. Despite the policies of liberalization and fiscal

reforms, the flow of private capital towards Africa is still too weak. In this regard, the report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) related to world investments during 1996, stresses that out of the $315 billion spent globally, only $5 billion was devoted to Africa.

Likewise, in a document on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa issued in March this year (E/ECA/CM.22/5), the Secretary-General emphasized that Africa is the only region in the world where poverty is expected to increase during this decade — the very decade dedicated to the elimination of poverty.

Now is not the time for promises but for action. The failure five years ago of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) should serve as a lesson and warning. Our recent past shows that whenever the international community has shown its will to do something, it has met the challenges of situations more demanding in terms of financial resources than UN-NADAF.

It is the profound conviction of my delegation and, no doubt, of all other African delegations that our continent does not want to be enclosed within the vicious circle of assistance and debt. On the contrary, what Africa expects from its partners is the opening of real opportunities so that it can take its place in the world trade and economic system. The definitive settlement of the debt crisis, assistance in the diversification of commodities in Africa and the lifting of customs barriers and other protectionist measures which hinder access of our products to external markets are measures which could help us in our development efforts.

Africa is a continent with enormous potential. Its recovery and economic growth would be a factor in stimulating the world economy. It is only with a true spirit of solidarity, complementarity and partnership that the goals of UN-NADAF can be achieved. This is how my delegation views and supports the draft resolution before us.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Owada of Japan for his personal efforts and those of his Government and for the extraordinary work accomplished in the mid-term review UN-NADAF. We also wish to thank and congratulate the other leaders of the Ad Hoc Committee.

**Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia): While the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) might have given hope for an improved socio-economic situation, it has, among others things, raised concern about Africa's development prospects. Five years after the international community entered into a renewed partnership with Africa, the road remaining to be covered for the implementation of UN-NADAF is much longer. On the whole, we in Africa have democratized, reformed and restructured. Yet, during the mid-term review, we found that, rather than improving, the situation in some countries has deteriorated, as the targets set are far from being achieved and resources are still lacking.

What is needed now, therefore, is not only an analysis of the well-known socio-economic problems that confront Africa, but also a process for implementing the recommendations made during the mid-term review, so as to complement Africa's efforts in forging ahead with its own development.

It is in this context that my delegation welcomes the outcome of the mid-term review, including the Secretary-General's report, contained in document A/51/228/Add.1, on estimates of projected resource requirements. We also express our thanks and appreciation to the officers of the Ad Hoc Committee for their efforts in steering the deliberations to a fruitful conclusion.

On general resource mobilization, the mid-term review identified the factors that impede Africa's achievement of development objectives. Among other facts, the Secretary-General's report reiterates, and rightly so, that exports from Africa cannot penetrate projected markets due to the obstacles that have been created. Furthermore, the agricultural policies of the industrialized countries tend to depress the world market prices of food products.

Indeed, the need for increased mobilization of resources for the successful implementation of UN-NADAF cannot be overemphasized. How can Africa mobilize domestic financial resources when public savings on the whole have fallen below the 1990 level, when most of the countries are experiencing a serious decline in their terms of trade, and when their need to borrow far outweighs their capacity to pay?

These are just a few of the questions we hope the mid-term review has enabled us to pose. We believe it is

crucial, therefore, *inter alia*, to address obstacles to Africa's trade performance in a holistic manner, including ensuring increased preferential access to developed country markets for African commodities. Africa's efforts in the area of commodity diversification need to be supported, as do the physical and institutional infrastructure and human resource development programmes.

It has been said time and again that political instability in Africa — which does not include the whole of Africa — is among the factors that are to blame for Africa's underdevelopment. We agree with that premise, for we fully recognize the link between peace and development. However, indications are that foreign direct investment has been selective, concentrating on those industries with the highest rate of return despite prevailing political instability.

It would be misleading to paint an overall gloomy picture of the economic situation of Africa. Some countries, including Namibia, have managed to attract some degree of foreign direct investment since 1991. On the whole, however, the trend has been negative, especially for the least developed countries. In a word, the few success stories in Africa have been overshadowed by the overall economic decline, and if this trend continues the performance of countries with modest economic growth may even drop below the current growth rate.

Africa's debt is said to be lowest in volume of all developing countries; but on the contrary, our inability to pay is the greatest. We need therefore to re-examine the shortcomings of the measures undertaken so far to address Africa's debt, for the issue is not how much we owe, but our ability to pay and what the alternatives are. We need lasting development-oriented solutions to Africa's debt problems.

We urge the international community to implement its commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance. Furthermore, we believe implementation of the 20/20 initiative, first embraced by Africa during the International Conference on Assistance for African Children, held in 1992, complements our partnership in the implementation of UN-NADAF. We therefore welcome the outcome of the Oslo meeting on 20/20 and call on the donor community to assist countries implementing the 20/20 initiative.

The United Nations is centrally located to give the outcome of the mid-term review the widest possible publicity among the heads of the agencies and institutions of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and among the donor community. This would contribute, we believe, to maximizing resource mobilization.

We need to find new ways to follow up and monitor the implementation of UN-NADAF at all levels. Relevant bodies within the United Nations system responsible for follow-up should be provided with adequate financial resources. In addition, we need to examine how we can effectively monitor the implementation of UN-NADAF during the remaining period. An annual review of the implementation process would pave the way to an effective follow-up.

*Mr. Martinez Blanco (Honduras), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Let me conclude by reiterating that, while it is now in the interest of the African people for Africa to develop, in the long term, the world will be at risk if Africa continues to be marginalized.

**Mr. Barnala** (India): I would like to congratulate Ambassador Owada of Japan and the other officers on their efforts in completing the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The outcome of that review is now before us. While it made a realistic assessment of the current situation, it was not able to progress as far as we would have liked in terms of international cooperation to support Africa's efforts. Further measures will be required in the areas of financial flows, trade access and technology transfers if the national efforts being made in Africa are to achieve the desired results. The deteriorating economic situation of the African continent has for a considerable period engaged the attention of the world. Indeed, it has been prominent on the agenda of the United Nations since the early 1990s.

India's ties with the nations of the African continent are deep and mutually enriching. For us, this valuable relationship dates back to the years of our independence movement. It was on African soil that the father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi, started his non-violent, passive resistance movement against racial discrimination and exploitation, as a precursor to our national struggle. India struggled side by side with African nations against colonialism. At the Asian Relations Conference in New

Delhi in March 1947, even before India had attained political freedom, our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, declared that India's freedom would remain incomplete until the whole of Africa was free.

In 1946 India took the initiative of inscribing the issue of apartheid on the agenda of the United Nations. Our commitment to the anti-apartheid struggle was absolute and was accompanied by political, economic and material support. We did not seek any material benefits by trading with the apartheid regime in violation of the embargoes. We rejoiced at the liberation of the African nations from colonial rule, the liberation of Namibia and the final end of apartheid in South Africa.

India's support of subsequent efforts of African countries to achieve economic development is rooted in our long-standing friendship with the people of Africa, and in our commitment to South-South cooperation and to the cause of the economic and social development of African countries. This support has manifested itself in tangible terms. Aside from supporting Africa's aspirations and endeavours in multilateral forums, we have shared our experiences, resources and capabilities through a high-quality technical and economic cooperation programme.

It was at India's initiative that the Action for Resisting Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid (AFRICA) Fund was established by the Non-Aligned Movement to provide project aid and other technical assistance to the front-line States in various critical areas. By 1992, the AFRICA Fund had disbursed up to $500 million in such assistance. Our active cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is yet another expression of our desire to be a partner in development efforts in Africa. Beyond our close bilateral relations with all African countries, we have maintained close links with African regional organizations, including the Organization of African Unity, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the SADC and the Economic Community of West African States.

In February 1996, the India International Centre in New Delhi organized a three-day conference entitled "Understanding Contemporary Africa: India and South-South Cooperation", which attracted participation from the majority of African countries and regional organizations. India also participated in the partners meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, in April 1996.

India has sought to participate in economic endeavours in Africa through, *inter alia*, the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC). We have interacted with many countries in Africa through technical assistance in the form of execution of projects, extension of training facilities, the deputation of experts, conducting feasibility studies, providing consultants and organizing study visits. More than 20,000 nominees from foreign countries, most of them from Africa, have been trained in India under this programme. Among the projects currently in hand are the establishment of a remote sensing centre in Nigeria, a vocational training programme centre in Senegal and several projects in Mauritius. Study visits to identify fresh projects in various other countries have also recently been undertaken. We have offered training facilities in a wide range of fields, such as banking, financial management, hydrology and water resource management, urban development, mass communications, fisheries, electronics, satellite image processing, packaging, food processing, small industries, crop research, sericulture, biogas technology, manpower planning and training. There are further South-South cooperation programmes in other areas, including new and renewable energy resources, biotechnology and gene banks, which India is coordinating on behalf of fellow developing countries.

Africa is the principal beneficiary of these programmes, and in 1995/96 roughly 6 per cent of the technical assistance rendered by India under the ITEC programme went to countries of the African continent. We have cooperated with our brothers and sisters in Africa for decades, since our own independence. Our programmes of cooperation with African countries have a long history, rooted in the anti-colonial struggles of the African people and their quest for economic growth and development.

There is little doubt that Africa will require considerable support from the international community in order to achieve its basic development goals. Economic reforms and structural adjustment programmes must be dovetailed with international support for measures aimed at encouraging agricultural and rural development, food security, investment promotion and integrating population trends with development. African economies will also need catalytic support from external variables, in terms of additional resource flows, better terms of trade for commodities, diversification of production and trade and enhanced foreign direct investment. Debt reduction and rescheduling measures are also an inalienable part of this

strategy. The measures so far agreed to in the mid-term review will need to be considerably enhanced.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate the fact that consensus on the urgency of programmes for the economic development of Africa already exists. We are discussing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular, the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries; and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade also encompass the countries in the African region. The Declaration adopted at the World Summit for Social Development included a specific commitment to the economic, social and human resource development of Africa. Work is now under way on an Agenda for Development. What is lacking, therefore, is not a vision or a set of plans and programmes, but the ready will to translate these into reality. The focus of our discussions and attention should therefore be on specific steps towards fulfilling our commitments and responsibilities to our partners in Africa, and not merely hammering out new theologies of development or development cooperation.

**Mr. Rubadiri** (Malawi): May I join those who have spoken before me to congratulate the President once again on his unanimous election to preside over this year's session. Already his diplomatic skills have confirmed our conviction that he will be able to guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion. We extend our felicitations to the other members of the Bureau. We fully associate ourselves with the statement of the Group of 77 and China made yesterday by my colleague, the representative of Costa Rica.

We welcome the reports of the Secretary-General on the "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s" contained in document A/51/228 and its addendum. We agree that the economic and social crisis facing the African continent since the early 1980s has continued unabated up to today. Despite modest achievements attained in some parts of the continent, the general trend and overall outlook remain bleak. Indeed, the structural constraints to growth have continued, and the social situation, as shown by the declining trends in all the major social indicators, especially the increase in poverty, has continued to give rise to concern.

The recently held mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) clearly revealed that there is a long way to go towards the realization of the New Agenda. The report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review gives insights into the areas which both the African countries and the international community need to work on in the spirit of partnership and shared responsibility.

It is estimated in the New Agenda that a minimum of $30 billion in official development assistance was required in 1992 to achieve an average annual growth rate of real gross national product of at least 6 per cent in African countries over the course of the 1990s. And after that year, official development assistance would need to grow at an average rate of 4 per cent per annum. The mid-term review has revealed that official development assistance stood at $26.4 billion in 1995. External indebtedness rose from $300 billion in 1991 to $322 billion in 1995.

We note with serious concern that the African share of world trade has declined during the period under review to 2.2 per cent. This is despite the preferential access to major world markets which African products have. In addition, the impact on the African countries of the outcome of the Uruguay Round agreement on multilateral trade is not fully clear. It is recognized, though, that the least developed countries and the non-food-importing developing countries — in particular those in Africa — may experience transitional costs arising from the loss of preferences in the European Community.

The diversification of African economies remains an important element in the New Agenda. Most African economies rely on a few primary commodities for much of their export earnings. These are adversely affected by fluctuations in the demand and prices of the primary commodities.

Most African Governments have embraced their share of responsibility in the New Agenda. It is noted that in the two major areas of macroeconomic reform and good governance, considerable progress has been attained by a number of countries. The liberalization of domestic prices and external trade, coupled with improvements in finance management through improved methods of accounting have, among other things, resulted in a drop in the number of countries that experienced negative growth from 19 in 1992 to four in 1995.

The Secretary-General's report points out, though, that human resources in many African countries remain inadequately developed, as is evident from the limited access of the population to education at all levels and to health care and other social services. High levels of unemployment and underemployment, particularly among the youth and women, are the other indicators.

My delegation therefore welcomes the recommendations for enhancing the implementation of the New Agenda as outlined by the Secretary-General in his report as well as those contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Mid-term Review. The mobilization of substantial new resources from all sources — public and private, traditional as well as new — is essential. While the Naples terms adopted by the Paris Club represent an important step in the evolution of an international debt strategy, we call upon the donor community to institute far-reaching measures, which go beyond the 67 per cent debt-stock reduction, towards a durable solution of the debt problem. There is a need to increase foreign direct investment flows to supplement the availability of resources for economic development in Africa. The developed countries should fulfil the agreed level of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance.

In my country, Malawi, a critical range of policy initiatives have been embarked upon to ensure compliance with the major pillars of the Agenda. Important among these are good governance and adherence to structural reforms as agreed with the Bretton Woods institutions. As regards good governance, Malawi's first democratically elected Government took power in 1994 on the premise of empowerment of the people, justice for all and respect for human rights. In the realm of structural reforms to the economy, which have resulted in some recovery in economic activity, with real gross domestic product growth averaging some 10 per cent in 1995 and 1996, the Government has also been steadfast. The reforms have included the liberalization of crop production and marketing. Happily, to a large extent, the major beneficiaries have been small farmers.

Further, inflation has decelerated sharply, from 98 per cent in 1995 to less than 30 per cent by the end of 1996. Indeed, cumulative inflation in the first months of 1996 suggests that a further drop is more than likely to be achieved in 1997. This development is very important because inflation affects hardest those with low incomes. Therefore, the sharp decline in inflation not only helped to establish a more stable environment for economic activity, but also contributed to the Government's efforts to alleviate poverty.

Malawi has seen significant progress toward improving the living conditions of the ordinary citizen, as evidenced by the many policy initiatives adopted in the past two years, including the reform of the agricultural system which has improved life in the rural areas. In addition, these efforts have benefited from assistance from international agencies and donors, including the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

It is accepted, however, that the economic situation remains fragile in Malawi. Continued fiscal discipline and a deepening of structural reforms are necessary to consolidate the gains achieved thus far and to make further progress. Increased international support will therefore continue to be needed for us to continue on this trend. As my Minister of Foreign Affairs informed the Assembly in his statement of 9 October 1996, in his remarks on UN-NADAF,

> "It is sad to note that the financial resources required for the programme have not matched the enthusiasm that revolved around the launching of the New Agenda. My delegation sincerely hopes that the mid-term review of the Agenda, which has just concluded, will reignite the enthusiasm of us all and enhance the political will of all the cooperating partners." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 28th meeting, p. 5)*

I wish, once again, to underscore this view.

We wish to reiterate the view that for the success of UN-NADAF, all of us need to rededicate ourselves and our commitment to the programme. While African countries are doing all they can, donor countries too need to support those efforts meaningfully with increased resources.

Finally, we wish to thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Owada of Japan, whose typically Japanese application to practical ideas is beginning to filter through to development projects in Africa. We consider his work to have been one of the great contributions made this year to the mid-term review of the New Agenda.

**Mr. Ayewah** (Nigeria): My delegation is pleased to participate in the general debate on agenda item 44

entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s". We associate ourselves with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Cameroon in his capacity as representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on behalf of the African Group. My delegation also fully supports the statement made on this agenda item by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In acknowledging the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly pursuant to resolution 50/160, and in the context of the conduct of the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), we want to congratulate and thank Ambassador Hisashi Owada, Permanent Representative of Japan and Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, for his personal exertions during the review. We would also like to thank the Vice-Chairmen who presided over the working groups for their diligence in guiding us through the mid-term review.

The New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which was born out of a desire to assist Africa in overcoming its difficulties of economic underdevelopment, is founded on the principle of cooperation and shared responsibility between Africa and the international community. The Agenda provides for specific goals and targets to be implemented within the programme period from 1991 to the year 2001. UN-NADAF should therefore be seen as a framework of consensus and partnership between Africa and the international community aimed at stimulating initiatives towards Africa's socio-economic development. Towards this end the New Agenda, which built on the frustrations of the earlier United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (1986-1990), set out in definitive terms a global compact of intent between Africa and the United Nations system on the one hand and between Africa and the international community on the other.

In particular, the developed countries and the donor community were to support and assist Africa's efforts in implementing the Agenda with a view to accelerating the economic growth of African countries. In our view, and as is clearly evident, the envisaged objectives of the Agenda are yet to be achieved minimally — even five years after adopting the New Agenda in 1991 — owing to lack of political will by the international community. I must hasten to add here that the international community goes beyond Western Europe and the donor community to include other regions of the world, the Bretton Woods institutions and non-governmental organizations. The experience of the mid-term review was a painful reminder that this fact was not fully recognized or accepted by all concerned.

Mindful of the fact that Africa's socio-economic development is, in the first instance, a primary responsibility of Africans themselves, many African countries — including my own country — Nigeria, have continued since the mid-1980s to pursue and implement economic reform measures in the context of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) with their implied social hardships for the citizenry. Despite their commitment to sustained economic reforms, African countries' experiences have been far from pleasant in terms of economic growth because of the increasing trend towards globalization of the world economy, the unfavourable external environment, poor access to the external market, declining returns on their commodities, and the unpredictability of the financial system.

Africa on its own has put a lot of store on the importance and continuing validity of economic integration within the framework of South-South cooperation. In this context, and as envisioned in the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community which entered into force in May 1994, African countries remain committed to the idea of subregional and regional economic cooperation as the defining pillars of economic emancipation and growth of the African continent. Consequently, this has led to the formation of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC) and, in my own subregion, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We believe that the creation of these entities will promote our regional and subregional integration and lead to the transformation of the African economies.

In March 1995, in a further effort to meet the challenges of development in the continent, the African Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted the Cairo Agenda for Action, which recognized the elements of democracy, good governance, peace and stability, security and social justice as necessary ingredients for socio-economic growth and sustainable development.

It is true that Africa's economy is essentially monocultural and agrarian, and for this reason many

countries depend on primary commodities for their export earnings and the survival of their teeming populations. Confronted with the fluctuation of commodity prices in the world market, and with an external debt burden currently estimated at well over US $322 billion, the servicing of which consumes over 30 per cent of the continent's export earnings, Africa's capacity to undertake meaningful development is seriously undermined. By the same token, the continent is confronted with the challenges of infrastructural and institutional capacity-building, human resources development and the promotion of science and technology for agricultural and industrial development.

These are issues of demand and supply economics that can only be sustained by an interplay of domestic capacity and external input. In this connection, and in order to enable African countries to achieve their development goals, there is an urgent need for the international community, in particular the developed countries, to respond concretely, in the spirit of cooperation and a New Partnership for Development, to Africa's mobilization for development. Our development partners should see their way clear to support and be seen to be involved in the quest to diversify African economies through the establishment of a diversification fund and the mobilization of new and additional resources to assist in fulfilling the intent of the New Agenda.

Although African countries in general, in the wake of the evolving trend towards globalization of the world economy, have introduced innovative and encouraging measures in order to promote investment opportunities, we note with disappointment the decline in the inflow of resources to the continent, not only of official development assistance but also of foreign direct investment.

During the mid-term review of the New Agenda, a significant impression was conveyed and registered, namely that there was a lack of awareness of the programme. Besides, a negative attitude on the part of the international community has continued to persist to the effect that Africa has an unfavourable economic and investment potential. The point must be made here that such an attitude is not only dysfunctional and inaccurate but clearly negates the principle of cooperation, shared responsibility and partnership in development. In this connection, there is a need for the international community to recognize Africa's enormous investment potential and highly profitable and favourable returns on investments. It is a continent which is replete with natural and human resources but needs the assistance and support of the international community in order to maximize the advantages in its march towards economic growth and sustained development. We encourage the international media to be constructive in their reporting and to move away from subjective and tendentious reporting, which delights in highlighting only the negative aspects of Africa's investment profile and environment while playing down the positive aspects. Here the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat has a leading role to play and we encourage it to play that role.

In view of Africa's marginalization in world trade and considering its obvious disadvantages, particularly in the short and medium terms, following the recently concluded Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and the Marrakesh agreements, we call on the international community, and in particular the developed countries, to ensure that implementation of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round provides Africa with special treatment with regard to the establishment of compensatory mechanisms as envisaged therein, as well as in the arrangements of the World Trade Organization.

African countries recognize the need to promote economic cooperation with the developing countries in other regions in the context of South-South cooperation. We see the initiative of South-South cooperation as essential in the growing interdependence of economies. Africa recognizes the tremendous development effort that has been made by other developing regions, especially in Asia. We believe that shared experience between Asia and Africa can also enhance Africa's endeavour in the realization of the perspectives of socio-economic development. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the Africa-Asia Forum and urge it to act as a useful component in constructive dialogue for development and in implementation of UN-NADAF.

The Nigerian delegation participated in the mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF which took place here in New York from 16 to 20 September 1996, and we know that UN-NADAF had a poor record of implementation. This ought not to be. UN-NADAF was a voluntary global compact of intent and commitment on the part of Africa, the United Nations system and the international community to help Africa to escape from its socio-economic difficulties. It is only right that we should all deliver on our various commitments. Africa is by no means suggesting that the international community owes it a living. Primary responsibility for Africa's development remains African. Africa must, therefore, not be prevented nor disabled from assuming that responsibility in the interest of its people. Africa is of

course grateful to those countries that, in spite of their domestic difficulties and the need to pander or answer to the sensitivities of their parliaments or electorates, have managed to provide some assistance in the implementation of UN-NADAF. But Africa is not a charity case in which the donor-recipient syndrome can be allowed to perpetuate itself. UN-NADAF has five years to go. It is appropriate at this fifty-first session of the General Assembly, in the wake of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF, that there is a political message of renewal of momentum and enthusiasm and — more importantly — of commitment to implement the Agenda, in the interest of the credibility of our Organization and the common humanity we all share.

**Mr. Hahm** (Republic of Korea): In this post-cold-war era of economic globalization and interdependence, the issue of development has gained increasing prominence. A new environment has emerged in which the challenge of development can best be met by a global partnership between developed and developing countries. The Korean delegation therefore believes that the current mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), one of the cornerstones of this new partnership, is both timely and important.

We welcome the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF as highly comprehensive and constructive, and believe that it can serve as an excellent basis for our deliberations on this issue. In this respect, the Korean delegation wishes to commend the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, conducted under the able leadership of Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan. The Korean delegation fully endorses the various recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee contained in document A/51/48. We would like to emphasize, however, certain points to which the Korean Government attaches special importance.

First of all, we believe that what is needed now for the cause of development in Africa is the translation of commitments into action. Since the adoption of UN-NADAF in 1991, we have witnessed a growing awareness and recognition of Africa's particular development needs, as evidenced by a series of encouraging recent events. The programmes of action of each of the major United Nations conferences in the 1990s have given new priority to the development of the African continent.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee report of May this year, entitled "Shaping the Twenty-First Century", set out quantitative targets within prescribed time-frames, and the June 1996 economic communiqué of the Lyon Summit of the Group of Seven major industrialized countries called for a new partnership between developed and developing countries.

African countries, for their part, have made substantial improvements in their overall economic performance. The number of African countries to achieve the target 6 per cent annual growth of gross domestic product increased from three in 1992 to 12 in 1995, while the number of countries with negative growth rates dropped from 19 in 1992 to three in 1995.

Many African countries have also engaged in institutional reform aimed at democratization and economic liberalization.

In the light of these positive developments on the part of both developed and developing countries, we believe that the time is ripe for the international community to do all it possibly can to promote the development of the African continent. My delegation hopes that the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee for the mid-term review of UN-NADAF, formulated on the basis of the specific needs of African countries, will be put into action without delay and will enjoy the full support of the international community.

Secondly, we would like to emphasize that the United Nations system should play a greater role in achieving the goals of the New Agenda. All United Nations organizations and specialized agencies should incorporate the goals of UN-NADAF into the formulation and implementation of their programmes and projects, and better fund and coordinate their programmes that complement the goals of the New Agenda.

In this respect the Korean delegation welcomes and fully supports the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, launched in March 1996, which should aim to provide practical proposals that reinforce the New Agenda. The initiative is all the more meaningful because of the active participation of the Bretton Woods institutions. We believe that the Special Initiative provides new momentum towards achieving the goals of UN-NADAF and should be an important practical step towards a more efficient implementation of the various programmes of action for Africa.

Thirdly, my delegation wishes to underline the importance of South-South cooperation, which is clearly indispensable to the successful implementation of the New Agenda. It is our country's sincere belief that South-South cooperation can provide a vital head start and lasting succour on the road to development. South-South cooperation, however, must be pursued not only bilaterally, but also in a multilateral context. The role of international organizations such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization should be strengthened in this regard. Assistance from donor countries through multilateral organs is also an important part of this effort.

Fourthly, international cooperation should focus on priority needs, targeting the most pressing needs of the African people, and taking into account the fact that development resources are limited. In this regard, the Korean delegation believes that several issues deserve particular attention, namely public health, ensuring sanitary drinking water, agricultural development, the expansion of education for children and job training for city dwellers.

The Republic of Korea has provided and will continue to provide various forms of assistance to African countries and to other developing countries. The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has extended technological assistance and sought to share with developing countries the experience accumulated in the course of our own economic development. African countries were recently made the priority recipients of KOICA's technological and human resources assistance programmes.

In addition to that, the Korea-Economic Commission for Africa Cooperation Fund, established last year, has been increased by 50 per cent in 1996. We have also decided to replenish the Korea Consultant Trust Fund in the World Bank, which also aims at sharing Korea's experience and know-how with other developing countries. Korea stands ready, commensurate with its economic capabilities, to make even greater contributions to the development of African countries.

Finally, the Korean delegation believes that Africa's wealth of human and natural resources endow it with enormous potential, and that it is the urgent duty of the international community to help the people of Africa translate that potential into reality as soon as they possibly can.

We hope that our deliberations under this agenda item will help to identify the best feasible method and means of achieving the goals of UN-NADAF and reinforcing the commitment of the international community to the cause of African development.

**Miss Durrant** (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegation of Jamaica on agenda item 44, entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s." My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We welcome the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), and wish to thank its Chairman, His Excellency Hisashi Owada, Permanent Representative of Japan, and the members of the Bureau for their leadership roles in guiding the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The mid-term review allowed for a critical examination of the progress made in the implementation of the New Agenda. It also reaffirmed and underscored the mutuality of commitments and responsibilities and the need for the countries of Africa and the members of the international community to take action. The review also examined critical development issues affecting the implementation of the Agenda and recommended measures to accelerate its implementation in order to foster sustained economic growth and sustained development in Africa.

Africa and its resources, notably its human resources, are of enormous potential; and the mid-term review afforded the opportunity for renewed commitment to the social and economic agenda of the continent.

Most African countries have, for their part, consistently taken appropriate actions to promote development, including instituting political and economic reforms. Actions taken by African countries have been aimed at achieving real and sustainable economic growth through, *inter alia*, the improvement of public finance and management methods, and the enhancement of efficiency and transparency in tax systems. We note that in almost all countries, reform measures have been taken and continue to be pursued in order to liberalize domestic prices and external trade. We must recognize the efforts of some 35 countries to make monetary adjustments and of some 21 to improve public finance management.

Regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration are other positive actions, with initiatives currently under way in northern, eastern and southern Africa. Other areas of focus include the stepping up of democratization; investment promotion; population and development; agriculture and food security, and South-South cooperation.

As a developing country, Jamaica, like its African counterparts, recognizes the value of these initiatives and the value of South-South cooperation as a vehicle for advancement in critical areas such as transfer of technology, training, joint ventures, trade and investment, education and the eradication of poverty.

Jamaica has over the years expressed its solidarity with the African people, a solidarity that is born of a history of cordial and friendly relations with countries on the African continent. We took a strong stand in the fight against apartheid and rejoiced with Africa when that system saw its demise. We recall that in the 1950s, even while still a colony, Jamaica followed the lead of India and instituted a trade boycott against South Africa.

As a country that has suffered under the heavy burden of external debt and the ensuing social and economic hardships resulting from structural adjustment, Jamaica is fully aware of the difficulties currently being confronted by our sister nations on the African continent. Africa's external debt is now widely acknowledged to be unsustainable, and we must support the search for durable solutions. We note, for example, that African debt has risen from $289 billion in 1991 to over $314 billion by 1995. It is clear that something must be done.

In order to achieve the major objectives of the New Agenda and the target growth rate of 6 per cent, the international community must accelerate its support to African countries in order to sustain the momentum leading to recovery and sustainable development in areas such as the further alleviation of the burden of external debt, the attraction of foreign private investment, increased official development assistance, trade facilitation and market access, and development assistance for capacity-building.

UN-NADAF calls for a full partnership between Africa and the international community. There is indeed a strong case for increasing the volume and concessionality of development assistance to Africa. There is a need to further enhance and improve the quality of international support to Africa's efforts in the 1990s.

Measures that should be considered include rechannelling aid to Africa's key development priorities; allocating resources to conflict prevention and reconstruction in post-conflict countries; and switching to non-debt-creating assistance.

Africa's efforts to address conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction should be incorporated into a more comprehensive and coordinated approach with the support of the relevant actors, including the United Nations, bilateral and multilateral donors. We recognize the need to strengthen the Mechanism for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts and early warning capacities of the Organization of African Unity.

The success of the New Agenda lies in effective follow-up and monitoring at the global, regional and national levels. The United Nations system has a critical role to play in ensuring that this becomes a reality. The Agenda needs to be continuously promoted by the relevant United Nations institutions in the context of clear mandates and policy directions. Concrete ways must be found to advance the cause of African development and to ensure that implementation becomes a reality. While there has been progress in human, institutional and private sector development, success is contingent upon both the continued political will of African countries and the commitment of the international community.

We are aware of the challenges as the African continent faces another five years of the New Agenda. One major challenge will be to marshal the massive sums needed to effectively implement the New Agenda. If Africa is to regain economic viability in the run-up to the new millennium, full and tangible support will be needed. International efforts will have to be channelled to focus on the well-articulated priorities of the African countries. Their own efforts at preventing and resolving conflicts will need to be further supplemented.

The Government of Jamaica remains fully committed to supporting the efforts being undertaken to implement the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s in the hope that this will contribute to the long-term development of our sister countries on the African continent.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Cuba has requested to participate in the debate on this item. Bearing in mind that the list of

speakers was closed yesterday at 5 p.m., I should like to propose, if there is no objection, that this delegation be included on the list of speakers.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. Awaad** (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of Egypt, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF).

Though the report truly reflects what has been achieved by the African States and the international community with regard to the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, it does not give a clear picture of the economic and social realities on the continent.

I should like to thank Ambassador Owada, the Permanent Representative of Japan, for his work as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the mid-term review, which met last September.

During the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), we agreed that the situation remained critical and we must step up our efforts for the development of the continent. We must work together at the national and international levels. We believe that responsibility for economic and social development lies primarily with the African States themselves. Africa will develop thanks to its peoples. Success will depend also on support for and the sustainability of those efforts.

With a view to supporting the work done by African Governments in recent years, we draw attention to the difficult circumstances accompanying the implementation of UN-NADAF. Over the last few years and, indeed, right up to today there have been problems of refugees and conflict. There has also been an unfavourable economic climate in respect of the terms of trade and the foreign debt burden, and a drop in official development assistance. Despite that, African countries have taken major measures at the national level as a basis for consolidating democracy. They have also undertaken economic recovery and structural adjustment programmes. In the past 10 years, some encouraging figures have emerged, along with a more favourable climate for domestic and foreign investment. Moreover, the Abuja Declaration is now taking effect.

In 1995 African Heads of State or Government adopted the Cairo Agenda for Action on revitalizing economic and social recovery in Africa. Africa has thus assumed an enormous responsibility for dealing with questions of security and stability within the continent, because those issues are so closely related to development. They have also established the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

During the mid-term review we said it was necessary to increase the volume of assistance given by the international community to African countries, particularly the least developed. We also said it was essential to target that assistance in accordance with national priorities. This requires a flexible approach, given the nature of existing problems, and means that the surrounding environment has to be taken into account.

In estimating the required resources, the Secretary-General has said that despite the efforts made by African States to improve their use of official development assistance, and despite efforts made by developed countries to help developing countries, since the early 1990s there has been a significant drop in official development assistance, to $20 billion, rather than the recommended $30 billion with an increase of 4 per cent yearly.

Four years after the adoption of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa, targets for mobilizing resources for development have been only partially met, despite efforts by the countries themselves to implement economic and social reform measures.

While some progress has been made in Africa in the last five years, this was due primarily to efforts made at the national level in African countries. Assistance by the international community has been below what is needed to support development in Africa, and has not been consonant with the goals set by the General Assembly, by consensus. Despite all this, during the mid-term review last September the African community took a very positive approach. They did not attempt to blame anybody; rather they tried to look to the future, seeking ways and means of encouraging cooperation between Africa and the international community.

We believe that the African countries themselves are primarily responsible for their own development. They will have to use their own resources, but the unfavourable economic environment surrounding Africa,

budgetary constraints and the reluctance of developed countries to help Africa are all obstacles to the financing and development of Africa.

Most African States will be unable to implement the economic reforms which are essential to development unless more financial resources are made available both internally and externally. We have to avoid failure like that encountered earlier in respect of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990.

It is essential that the international community make a collective endeavour to support the sincere efforts being made by African States. If we really wish to sustain the development of Africa we must move from words to action so that Africa can emerge from the vicious cycle of poverty and underdevelopment and develop at this most important crossroads on the path to the new millennium.

**Mr. Kasanda** (Zambia): The delegation of Zambia would like to share its perspective on this important agenda item: the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We are grateful to the Secretariat for the reports of the Secretary-General on this item. Our appreciation also goes to Ambassador Owada of Japan, who successfully presided over the mid-term review of UN-NADAF.

We would like from the outset to reaffirm our support for the goals and objectives set in UN-NADAF and, indeed, the outcome of the mid-term review. We should collectively pursue them with a spirit of partnership, because they remain valid and vital to the sustainable development of Africa.

Africa is still the region most in need of development assistance. This is likely to be the case for many years to come, given the high incidence of poverty in the region.

In the first five years of UN-NADAF, Africa has experienced marginalization. Africa's share of world trade, for example, has declined steadily, from 5 per cent in 1990 to 2.3 per cent in 1995. The results of the Uruguay Round are not expected to be positive for our continent, and my delegation hopes that terms of compensation will be specified for net losers in the Uruguay Round, as agreed at Marrakesh. Also regarding resource flows, net official development assistance declined from $25 billion in 1992 to $21.5 billion in 1995.

External debt, estimated at $270 billion in 1990, reached $322 billion in 1995. Unless major debt reductions are achieved by the close of UN-NADAF, external debt will continue to undermine Africa's development.

African countries have accomplished a great deal in the last five years in terms of economic policy adjustments in order to realize the goals set in UN-NADAF. Despite the many efforts that most African countries have been making to ensure economic recovery and sustained, accelerated economic growth, external factors such as the ones I have just cited have continued to hold back any significant progress.

The report of the Secretary-General rightly notes the major steps African countries have taken to promote the region's development during the past five years. At the regional level, the most notable development has been the signing on 3 June 1991 of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. This development is of great significance, because, among other things, it will assist in the harmonization of economic policies within the region. Continent-wide, this economic cooperation and integration is expected to lead to expanded trade among the African countries.

We have hope in the success of the African Economic Community, because it is being built on strong foundations established at subregional levels. In southern Africa, for example, we transformed our Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), into an organization devoted to promoting deeper economic integration and renamed it the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The harmonization of economic policies and the greater understanding being established at the subregional level can only facilitate the realization of our aspirations for a strong and effective African Economic Community.

SADC is not the only example. We also created the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which replaced the Preferential Trade Area (PTA). Other subregions in Africa have similar arrangements. As we move ahead with the implementation of UN-NADAF, the challenge of African policy-making will be to harmonize these arrangements and pave the way for a consolidated African Economic Community by the year 2020.

At the national level, Zambia has been pursuing an active economic recovery programme. The centrepiece of

our policies has been the liberalization of the economy, shifting it away from a situation in which the State is the major player and towards one that is driven by the private sector. In this context, we have put in place monetary and fiscal policies conducive to both local and foreign investment. We are also privatizing certain aspects of public organizations.

In order to improve our revenue collection system, an autonomous revenue collection body was created and has been operating efficiently.

Despite these efforts, Zambia will not be able to realize the goals of UN-NADAF without the continued assistance of the international community. We still need official development assistance, and foreign direct investment in our economy is very much required.

I should like to end my statement with a few comments specific to implementation. First, we are concerned that there is a lack of clarity on how the United Nations is going to pursue the implementation of UN-NADAF and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. We recognize, of course, that the two are complementary. In our view, however, it is neither correct nor helpful to consider UN-NADAF as a mere advocacy statement on the development problems and challenges our region is facing, and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative as an operational and more active agenda, and hence more deserving of donor support.

In our view, complementarity is needed at both the advocacy and operational levels, as the two elements are characteristic of both programmes. The way forward, we believe, is synchronization.

We would like to encourage the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries (OSCAL) to continue to work in a coordinated manner, in consultation with all stakeholders, on determining how to better achieve this, taking into consideration in particular the results of the mid-term review.

Beyond this, we call for a strengthened OSCAL. The Economic Commission for Africa should not be kept marginal to such a process. A strong coordination link within the United Nations system is of vital importance to the full and effective implementation of UN-NADAF.

Finally, we appeal to the donor community and to the international financial institutions to continue their support for UN-NADAF as well as for the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa.

**Mr. Ngo Quang Xuan** (Viet Nam) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour and a pleasure for us to address the Assembly once again in order to share our views on a very important subject.

At the outset, the delegation of Viet Nam wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representatives of other Member States, on the major challenges and difficulties facing the African continent and on the efforts made over the past five years by the African countries and the international community as a whole, including our Organization and its agencies, to implement the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

I take this opportunity also to congratulate the Secretary-General on his detailed report (A/51/228 and Add.1) containing relevant recommendations. We are grateful also for the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (A/51/48). The in-depth analysis of a number of essential aspects of development in Africa relating to the implementation of the New Agenda, and the suggestions contained in the reports could provide good matter for reflection and reference in our discussion here today as we consider the mid-term review of the implementation of the Agenda.

By resolution 46/151, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and called on the international community to make a substantial contribution to the economic recovery and development of the African continent. The Agenda reflects the commitment of African countries and of the international community to cooperation towards the promotion of the sustainable development of the continent. The essential goals of the New Agenda are accelerated change, integration, diversification and the growth of the African economies, with a view to strengthening them as part of the global economy to make them less vulnerable to external shocks and more dynamic, with a view to making the development process more endogenous and to increase the autonomy of African countries.

Likewise, the interdependent global economy continues to be dominated by uncertainty, imbalances and recession. Negative economic growth rates, persistent imbalances in the fields of trade and finance, an increase in situational and structural unemployment, and the absence of coordination in exchange rates and trade policies are problems related to the system of the developed world which have a negative impact on developing countries, including our brother countries in Africa.

Since then, many initiatives and efforts have been undertaken in the framework of our Organization to ensure better coordination in the implementation of the New Agenda. Theme conferences have been organized under United Nations auspices, and these have made the international community more aware that the African continent is urgently calling for international solidarity.

We must note that the economic and social situation of Africa today remains critical. The continent runs the risk of being marginalized in the global economy. Long-standing difficulties have worsened the situation of unemployment, poverty and other social problems, including rapid population growth, ecological deterioration, malnutrition and illiteracy; these have become sources of instability and political conflict in the continent. No challenge could be more crucial for the international community today than the survival and the sustainable development of Africa.

We share the view expressed by several delegations that the development of Africa undeniably depends first and foremost on the efforts and the struggle waged by the African peoples themselves. Indeed, in these past five years, many African countries have made enormous efforts and have had a certain measure of success in the areas of economic reform, modernization and agricultural and human resource development. As the Secretary-General's report rightly states, the number of countries showing negative growth was only 4 in 1995 compared to 19 in 1993. The number of countries reaching the goal of 6 per cent annual growth in gross domestic product went from 3 in 1992 to 12 in 1995. These first achievements, while modest, have shown that Africa is finally on the right track.

It is nevertheless regrettable that historical factors and the constraints imposed by the external economic environment, including a reduction in official development assistance, the heavy debt burden, deteriorating terms of trade, and increased barriers impeding access to developed country markets have prevented any fundamental improvement in the economic situation. The international community must therefore adopt concrete measures so that Africa may work towards revitalization. Developed countries should first and foremost honour their commitments under the New Agenda and other relevant international agreements related to the development of Africa in order to reach sustainable solutions to the challenges faced by the continent.

As our Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam, stressed in his address to the General Assembly in the general debate, international cooperation and in particular capital flows and technological transfers from developed countries to underdeveloped countries are indispensable and indeed are necessary and beneficial for the sustainable development of underdeveloped countries. Thus, foreign direct investment should play a larger role in the economic development of African countries because it can contribute to expanding productive capacity and to promoting the transfer of sophisticated technologies and managerial skills without an increase in the foreign debt. Many African countries have adopted policies aimed at attracting foreign investment, but the response has been modest.

The question of the foreign debt burden is closely related to sustainable growth, development and poverty eradication. Low commodity prices and a crushing external debt are among the factors which account for the continent's mediocre results at the economic level. Any serious attempt to deal with the question of sustainable growth and development and with the reduction of poverty must go hand in hand with measures to resolve once and for all, and to cancel, the external debt of African countries. The international community must formulate new radical bilateral and multilateral initiatives to resolve the debt problem of African countries.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to underscore that as we advance towards the next millennium the international community must undertake concerted efforts to assist Africa in taking the necessary giant steps to join in the development process set forth in United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. We hope that the mid-term review that we are discussing today will allow us to fulfil the commitments made by the international community to meet the development needs of this large part of humankind. Viet Nam continues to follow closely the economic and political developments which have taken place in brother African countries over the past few years and hopes that, based on their own

efforts and on the support and assistance of the international community, Africa will achieve a more dynamic and sustainable pace of development.

**Mr. Türk** (Slovenia): My delegation wishes to commend the Secretary-General for the reports prepared for consideration by the General Assembly under the present agenda item, "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s". Together with the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, they represent a valuable basis for discussion and future action.

Slovenia fully endorses the statement made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Ireland, on behalf of the European Union and associated States. Today we wish to add several points that are, we believe, relevant to the current discussion.

It is generally agreed today that global development cannot be complete without an improvement in the situation in and the development of Africa. The priority character of efforts towards the development of Africa was recognized in a variety of ways at the recent series of global conferences and is addressed specifically in the documents related to the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda. It is generally agreed that, in addition to the efforts made by the countries in the region, there is a need to promote full partnership for development. Aid is important, but for sustainable development trade and investments are the most important forms of cooperation.

There are some promising signs, and they should not be overlooked. In the report of the Secretary-General dated 6 August 1996 on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda (A/51/228), we read that there has been some improvement in the overall economic performance in Africa. The number of countries recording negative growth rates has dropped, and the number of countries that achieved the targeted 6 per cent annual growth rate in their gross domestic product increased from 3 in 1992 to 12 in 1995. This development must not be overlooked.

Furthermore, as stated in a recent United Nations study on foreign direct investment and repeated in many subsequent documents, the return on investment made in Africa is substantially higher than in other developing regions, and even in most developed countries. This indicates the potential for increased investment flows as economic reforms proceed and the investment climate improves.

However, the potential that exists requires effective international cooperation. The principles of full partnership and shared responsibility call for the international community to provide adequate and assured support for the implementation of the New Agenda. The level, scope and modalities of cooperation should be improved. This would include channelling assistance to Africa's development priorities and switching to non-debt-creating assistance.

The debt burden is among the main obstacles to the more rapid development of Africa. The debt burden of some $350 billion conditions the pace of development and inevitably affects all the efforts directed towards the strengthening of economies in the region. It is therefore essential that action be taken. The agreement to act through new initiatives such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative is an important step in this context. Other steps need to follow. Progress in the efforts for debt relief should be monitored and supported, particularly since the experience with previous debt-relief initiatives have not succeeded in reducing the level of indebtedness in Africa. We see that task also as an opportunity for the United Nations to establish a meaningful and system-wide operation for the implementation of the mid-term review.

In addition to economic, and in particular macroeconomic, measures, it is important to devote the appropriate attention to social and political issues. The inherent linkages between economic and social aspects of development are generally recognized and have been given special importance in the documents of the World Summit on Social Development. The commitment to work for the eradication of poverty is a clear expression of this.

However, the implementation of this commitment in the context of the complex economic and social realities of African countries is a particularly difficult task requiring sustained effort. As shown recently in an evaluation of the implementation of the World Bank's operational directive for the reduction of poverty — press reports on that evaluation were published less than a week ago — it appears that the social aspects of adjustment and poverty reduction are not always adequately represented in country assistance strategies. This would suggest that additional efforts will be necessary to develop sufficiently comprehensive strategies

of cooperation for development in Africa. Such strategies should include as central elements debt relief and support for direct investments. However, poverty reduction and the social aspects of development also will have to be included and should be given a higher priority than has been the case thus far.

In the case of Africa, additional consideration must be given to the problem of refugees. Africa has the largest concentration of refugees. Not only does this represent a huge burden for an impoverished continent, but it is also a reminder that political and security issues have to be included in the development equation for Africa. The problem should be approached from two directions simultaneously. There is an urgent need for the United Nations and the Security Council to devote as much attention as possible to the crisis situations in Africa, in particular in the Great Lakes region. Long-term solutions should be devised, and repatriation of refugees should be made one of the basic priorities.

On the other hand, however, it would be inappropriate to perceive Africa's political problems and military conflicts as unrelated to the underlying problems of development. The successful implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s would also represent a major contribution to political stability and to the prevention of conflicts in the region and of the resulting humanitarian problems. It is not an exaggeration, therefore, to say that the successful implementation of the Agenda would represent an important contribution not only to the African region but also to the redefinition of the United Nations and its transformation into an effective instrument of social and political change.

**Mr. Abulhasan** (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The peoples of the world look to the United Nations to play a very important role in the area of development throughout the world. But development objectives have at times become dreams — dreams that do not come true. In their stead, there is death and destruction, caused by man himself. War has become the major obstacle to development in all sectors. Many now believe that there can be no development without peace and without joint and serious efforts to implement development programmes and plans.

Kuwait welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly in December 1991 of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). This is the title of agenda item 44, which we are considering today. The New Agenda is a concrete manifestation of what is being done to achieve true development, which the international community hopes will occur. My delegation wishes to express its great appreciation to the Secretary-General for his outstanding work for the implementation of UN-NADAF. We should like also to thank him for his comprehensive report on the item, which is before us in document A/51/228.

We support the various conclusions of the Secretary-General's report, especially the point that we must try to ensure the success of UN-NADAF by giving proper attention to investment flows from the international community to support the efforts of the African countries themselves. These countries will be invited to create all the conditions necessary to persuade donor countries and institutions to help them carry out their plans.

Kuwait would like also to express its appreciation for the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and especially for the work of the Chairman of that body, Ambassador Owada of Japan. In this context, the African countries must be aware of the importance of sustainable development in their countries. They must shake off the horrors of war and military conflict, with their accompanying devastation of human and material resources. Such conflict also discourages potential investors. Human and material support are the keystone of — indeed, the key to — sustainable development throughout in the world.

Kuwait attaches great importance to development projects and plans in Africa. We are proud that our interest in development in Africa, and our assistance for development, did not begin only in the 1990s, but extends much further back than that. We appreciate the growing interest of the international community in development in various parts of the world, including Africa. Kuwait has provided financial assistance for development plans in Africa at the official level and at a people-oriented level.

Kuwait firmly believes that it is very important for Africa to achieve a certain stability and prosperity. I should like to give details of loans provided by the Kuwaiti development fund. We have provided 142 low-interest loans, amounting to about $1.5 billion, to 33 countries in Africa. In addition, we have 42 technical assistance projects, involving 25 African countries, with

an overall value of approximately $25 million. The countries that receive such Kuwaiti assistance have also benefited from the initiative of the Amir of our country to write off all interest due to Kuwait. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah announced the initiative on 27 September 1990 in the General Assembly.

The reasoning behind the initiative is that we feel a certain solidarity with some countries, including African ones, and understand the material difficulties that have resulted from the accumulation of loans, which impede their development efforts. On a human level, non-governmental organizations in Kuwait have played an important role, which is greatly appreciated by the people of Africa. I should like to refer to some of these initiatives. The African Muslim Agency has been providing grants and assistance to many African countries since 1981. The Agency focuses on training, which we believe is the key to enabling people to make a better future for themselves. Some 95,000 African students have been able to study with grants provided by this non-governmental organization, and 200 higher education scholarships have been provided for engineering and technology. We are involved in 34 rural hospitals and dispensaries, 76 water supply operations, and various projects for women. Some $8.5 million have been provided to assist refugee children in Somalia. Many other programmes have also been carried out by Kuwaiti organizations.

Today, I should like to emphasize that all of Kuwait's development assistance is based on thorough study and monitoring by the competent bodies in my country, which are anxious to ensure that such assistance is best used to respond to the real needs of the citizens of African countries. We are establishing scientific and teaching funds and economic projects, all of which will be very productive and beneficial. Kuwait offers this assistance in a spirit of friendship and on the basis of our close links with the countries of Africa.

Regarding cooperation, I might mention that Kuwait co-chairs the African-Arab group with Burkina Faso. We do this to ensure that we have dialogue with African countries on issues of mutual concern and interest — for example, development in all of its aspects. In addition, Kuwait chairs the committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference that is involved in combating desertification in countries in the Sahel. This committee meets regularly, and the next meeting will be in Kuwait in a few days. All of this shows that Kuwait is anxious to help its brother African countries overcome the obstacles they face in their efforts to develop.

In conclusion, I should like to highlight the importance for African countries of realizing that without peace and stability there can be no development. Creating and managing development requires the political will of all the countries of Africa, to ensure a certain degree of integration. There are projects and plans designed to ensure development in Africa, but they require stability. They can then lead to the prosperity that we all hope for in the world of the future.

We thank God, and we request his assistance.

**Mr. Mangoaela** (Lesotho): Permit me at the outset to extend our warm appreciation to Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan, as Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and to his Bureau for the impressive manner in which they guided the mid-term review. I should also like to thank, through Ambassador Owada, the Government of Japan for the unwavering interest that it continues to manifest in the fortunes of the people of Africa through the several meetings and conferences it has organized devoted to finding solutions to Africa's problems. Let me further declare that my delegation completely endorses the views of the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, as well as those to be expressed by the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity.

Without a vision, any development effort is likely to fail. Through the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), Africa and her development partners have emerged with a refocused vision and with the resolve to make the second half of the Agenda the bridge to a successful new millennium.

The Ad Hoc Committee examined whence the African region came, where its development effort stands, and what the way forward is. In the process they came to the conclusion that yes, some progress has been made, but clearly not enough. Indeed, in some respects it could even be said that Africa has moved backwards. Let us, in this regard, consider the following findings of the mid-term review. First, many of the critical social and economic problems that led to the adoption of UN-NADAF in 1991 still exist, and in some countries the problems have even worsened. Secondly, it had been estimated that in order to achieve a real annual growth rate in gross national product of at least 6 per cent over the course of the 1990s, African countries needed a

minimum of $30 billion in official development assistance in 1992, an amount which then needed to grow at 4 per cent per annum. This amount, however, stood at only $26.4 billion in 1995. Thirdly, Africa's external debt increased from $300 billion in 1991 to $322 billion in 1995.

It is against this background that a proper assessment can be made of the implementation of the Agenda. On one level the review was a resounding success in that Africa and her partners reached a consensus, often after prolonged and intensive debate, on the slow progress that had been achieved and on the enormous tasks that still lie ahead. On another level, however, it was clearly recognized that the implementation had left much to be desired.

The review comes at a time when a dark cloud hangs over the future of international economic cooperation, a situation that has an especially ominous portent for Africa, the continent with the most pressing economic problems. Africa is mired in poverty, political instability, a crushing debt burden, declining living standards and diminishing hope for meaningful lives for the majority of her people. When called upon to make sacrifices, the people of Africa, as the review has demonstrated, have done so with impressive fortitude, and yet the prospect that such sacrifices will ensure a better life remains elusive. The idealism that inspired the creation of the United Nations at San Francisco 51 years ago seems to be only a chimera now. The lofty words of the Charter, "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom", ring hollow today as we witness occasional fatigue on the part of our partners.

I say "occasional" because from time to time there have also been glimmers of hopeful signs of continuing commitment to assisting Africa. One such glimmer is the enthusiasm with which the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa has been received. While we do not consider the Special Initiative a substitute for UN-NADAF, it should complement it in a very important way. As is known, the Special Initiative's target for expenditures is $25 billion per annum, while that of UN-NADAF is $30 billion. It is clear, therefore, that the shortfall must be met somehow.

The problems of Africa present a challenge to the entire international community to manifest its abiding commitment to a collective destiny in which the deprivation of each and every member of the human race is the concern of all of us. We live in a world of contradictions. At the political level we each insist most strenuously on our separateness and on the inviolability of our sovereignty. Yet on the economic plane we are inexorably moving towards the erasure of distinguishing boundaries; we are constructing a single economic space in which goods and services will move without let or hindrance. The new phenomenon of globalization requires that we open our borders to the goods and services of others and in so doing give testimony to our oneness. Is it not time that we gave tangible meaning to the interdependence inherent in globalization by reviving the spirit that animated the founding fathers (unfortunately mothers were excluded at that time) of the United Nations?

The outcome of the mid-term review presents a challenge to the international community to mobilize the financial resources required to bring about Africa's economic transformation. We are sometimes told that Africa's recovery cannot be achieved by donor-led initiatives, but by the greater involvement of the private sector. We believe that is only part of the story, however. The full story is that for the majority of African countries reliance on foreign direct investment is not realistic, as statistics have repeatedly shown that such investment goes to only a handful of developing countries — those that have already evinced a measure of economic development. The basic infrastructure that would attract private investment to Africa is lacking in the great majority of the countries.

Hence, it is inevitable that official development assistance should continue to play a major role in the recovery process of these countries. Indeed, that was the unanimous conclusion of the Tokyo Conference on Development Strategy that was hosted by the Government of Japan in March 1995. Furthermore, it is unrealistic to expect private investment to be made in the social sectors of health and education. For their part, African people and their leaders need to continue to apply themselves to the immense task of bettering their prospects of recovery through ongoing programmes of political and economic reform, releasing the energies — both physical and intellectual — of the citizenry through the protection and promotion of civil liberties and fundamental human rights, and through the empowerment of women and youth, who are the underutilized agents of economic endeavour.

Africa's resilience and ability to pick itself up from the ashes like the proverbial phoenix are a matter of historical record. I have no doubt that African leaders and African people will rise to the present challenge and

will take into their own hands their fate in the next century. It is a positive omen and a source of promise that there is much confluence of thought and strategy between the Organization of African Unity's Cairo declaration on African development and the outcome of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF.

On the basis of the wealth of experience available within the United Nations system and the continuing commitment of Africa's development partners to the region's socio-economic advancement, coupled with heartening new evidence of our continent's increasing respect for and dedication to the core values of sound governance, there is yet hope for Africa. As the review indicates, quite a few countries have achieved the growth rate of 6 per cent or above which was set by UN-NADAF. We look at their achievements with more hope than envy, and we draw inspiration from their success. We are also convinced that the majority of the international community still believes in international cooperation, especially among the countries of the South. Thus, South-South cooperation holds great promise as a complement to the traditional cooperation that Africa has had with its development partners of the North. In this regard, we have been heartened by the expressions of solidarity that we have received from the countries of the South.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has prepared estimates of projected resource requirements, set out in document A/51/228/Add.1. I consider it appropriate to conclude with a direct quotation from the ECA's addendum to the Secretary-General's report:

> "While it is the primary responsibility of African States to bear the bulk of their development burden by tapping as a matter of priority their own financial resources, the rigid international economic environment, the domestic economic hardship and the lukewarm disposition of some creditors to adopt radical measures have constituted obstacles to the mobilization of financial resources and to the development of Africa. Most African countries will be unable to implement the economic reforms required for development without further domestic and foreign financial resources. Nor can Africans and the international community afford to see yet another international initiative for Africa's socio-economic recovery and development fail." *(A/51/228/Add.1, para. 53)*

**Mr. Illueca** (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Government of Panama has faithfully supported United Nations actions for the development of Africa. Today's discussion of the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), gives my delegation an opportunity once again to put on record our voice and our will, joining with those of others wishing to help channel international assistance towards actions better directed to placing Africa on the path to sustainable development and to the true well-being of the peoples of that continent. With this in mind, my delegation endorses the statement made on this question by the delegation of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In the case of Africa, no Panamanian can fail to have a vision and an interested opinion. This interest is based on the extraordinary contribution made to Panamanian culture by African men and women and their descendants who came directly to Panama as early as the sixteenth century, and then in the nineteenth century, and then again at the beginning of the twentieth century from Caribbean islands. These Africans, who arrived in Panama at different times, blended with our national character and enriched it, bringing their nuances to our views of music, poetry and art, and influencing our daily lives in a way that protected Panamanians from the distorted images which the West has often had of Africa.

For Panamanians, since the sixteenth century, Africans from east or west came from a geography which, although unknown, was never considered far away or alien, as it was for other peoples in other latitudes and regions. The African members of the Panamanian people have overcome the test of integration and for a long time have been a deep and lasting part of our national reality.

Panamanians do not lose sight of the fact that we are part of a world in which the unity of the human species depends on the constant exercise of solidarity. Panama confirms its solidarity with Africa because we recognize that Africa is exceptional. It has been acknowledged by the United Nations, by the specialized agencies and by the entire international community as a whole as exceptional in terms of urgencies and opportunities, which calls for an exceptional mobilization of political will, and of human, technological and financial resources in order to speed up implementation of the New Agenda for the remainder of the decade and beyond, in later years, in line with the draft resolution recommended in section IV of document A/51/48. To act towards the development of Africa has become urgent; this is

tantamount to saying that what is today being programmed and done has been needed since yesterday.

In April of this year, something which happened here at the United Nations was in tune with the urgent need to work towards priority objectives for the development of Africa, and to do so in a more effective, more rapid and efficient way. I am referring to the establishment of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. The Initiative provides a global approach to Africa's urgent needs and brings together all of the agencies and mechanisms of the system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, in financing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

In August of this year, it was my personal honour to participate in Tokyo, Japan, at a high-level seminar on the development of Africa, generously organized by the Japanese Government. At that seminar, I had the occasion of welcoming the Special Initiative on Africa. My delegation wishes to recognize the work done by Ambassadors Owada of Japan, Insanally of Guyana, Reyn of Belgium and Dangue Rewaka from Gabon, which has given us a clearer idea of all aspects of United Nations consideration of items relating to the development of Africa.

Now, two months later, today's debate gives me the opportunity to reiterate that the delegation of Panama is among the delegations interested in Africa and its future for reasons very similar to those contained in the well-known statement by President Nelson Mandela: because we

> "dare to think that what we are about is people". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 37th meeting, p. 6)*

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*

United Nations A/51/PV.53

# General Assembly

Fifty-first Session

*Official Records*

**53**rd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 5 November 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Turnquest (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Agenda item 44** *(continued)*

**Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s**

**Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (A/51/48)**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/228 and Add.1)**

**Draft resolution (A/51/48, sect. IV)**

**Mr. Rantao** (Botswana): As I am taking the floor for the first time, allow me to congratulate the President on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and his Bureau for the excellent report before this Assembly.

It must be pointed out from the outset that while the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) was a laudable initiative, it lacked a clear operational framework both within the United Nations system itself and at the country level. Moreover, there was no clear framework for coordination between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions with regard to its implementation. Advocacy for the programme at the country level was also very weak.

In this regard, we welcome the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa by the Secretary-General in March of this year. The Special Initiative provides an operational framework for UN-NADAF which has been lacking. The Special Initiative should, however, not be treated as a replacement for UN-NADAF but rather as its complementary arm.

All the reports before the General Assembly on this agenda item clearly indicate that official development assistance flows to Africa fell well below the $30 billion that was the minimum annual target figure required for the implementation of UN-NADAF. Moreover, funding for United Nations operational activities for development has declined significantly over the past few years. This is clearly contrary to the commitments made regarding the implementation of UN-NADAF.

Coincidentally, we are discussing this agenda item during the United Nations Pledging Conference for

96-86718 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Development Activities. It is our sincere hope that the pledges will be a reflection of the commitment of Member States to the role of the United Nations in the multilateral development process, a United Nations which can complement national efforts in meeting the objectives that have been spelled out in past international conferences.

While it is appreciated that not all official development assistance flows can be channelled through the United Nations system, Botswana shares the view that the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies should be strengthened and provided with adequate resources to participate in the development process where they have a comparative advantage.

While African States have reaffirmed their primary responsibility for the development of their countries, the globalization of the world economy makes it imperative that we seek global solutions to the development problems with which our countries are grappling. Africa expects the unswerving support and cooperation of the international community in this regard.

The growth of the African economies will in the end not benefit Africa alone, but the developed countries as well. Growing and vibrant African economies will usher in prospects for global trade between Africa and the rest of the world.

In this connection, we welcome the latest initiative by the World Bank to raise the ceiling for debt relief for the highly indebted poor countries from 67 per cent to 80 per cent. Botswana calls for flexibility in the implementation of the initiative to ensure that all affected countries will benefit. Experience has illustrated that only a handful of countries have benefited from past initiatives because of lack of flexibility.

With regard to trade, Botswana shares the view that the international community should support the efforts of African countries in the development and maintenance of trade infrastructures in order to cope with future challenges and benefit fully from multilateral trade arrangements, especially following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round. In this connection, we wish to recognize the important work being undertaken by the International Trade Centre and the Commonwealth Secretariat to prepare the Governments of the developing countries fully for the implementation of the Uruguay Round.

My delegation also calls for the continued support of the United Nations and the international community to help the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) to implement its regional programme.

My delegation supports the recommendation contained in paragraph 92 of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee regarding poverty eradication and the implementation of the 20/20 concept, which was adopted by the Social Summit. The eradication of poverty remains one of the central themes of the Botswana Government's policy.

The Government of Botswana, in conjunction with United Nations representatives, is currently preparing a country strategy note for the period 1997-2003 which covers some of the priorities identified in UN-NADAF, including the question of poverty eradication.

It is the hope of my delegation that in the light of the shortcomings that were identified during the mid-term review, concerted efforts will be undertaken to implement UN-NADAF successfully during the last five years of its life.

**Mr. Kamal** (Pakistan): We have before us the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, contained in document A/51/48. My delegation agrees with the Ad Hoc Committee's evaluation of the limited progress achieved so far, as well as with its recommendations for further measures to attain the goals of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF).

The agreement on the New Agenda for Africa, five years ago, represented a bargain. The African States reaffirmed their primary responsibility for the development of their countries, while the international community committed itself to supporting their efforts for the development of Africa. Concrete commitments were undertaken by all parties for the attainment of well-defined goals in a given time-frame.

The mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda underlines sad realities. Five years after its adoption, the goals of UN-NADAF, as set out in resolution 46/151, remain elusive. Many of the critical social and economic problems that led to the adoption of the resolution still exist. Some progress has been achieved, but in relation to the objectives that were set, most remains to be done. Some 45 to 50 per cent of the

inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa today live below the poverty line. Unless reduced substantially, the incidence of poverty and the rate of population growth in the region will threaten economic stability and growth, and will undermine social stability in most of Africa.

The Secretary-General has reported that there has been forward movement in Africa in redefining the respective roles of the State and the private sector. Initiatives have been taken to promote private entrepreneurship and to improve the business environment. The majority of African countries have engaged in constitutional reform. During the past five years, civic organizations have emerged in nearly every country. All this has resulted in significant improvement in the overall economic performance of Africa, the number of countries recording negative growth rates dropping from 19 in 1993 to 3 in 1995. The number of countries that achieved the target of 6 per cent annual growth in gross domestic product increased from 3 in 1992 to 12 in 1995.

A report of the African Development Bank released in October 1996 attributes the significant improvement in Africa's economic performance during 1995 to the fact that a growing number of countries in the region have been able to establish conditions necessary for macroeconomic stability and sustainable growth. Despite these developments, Africa's outstanding external debt totalled approximately $306 billion in December 1995. This is an increase of $14 billion over 1994.

While Africa's medium-term economic outlook is promising, sustainable development over the long term calls for strategies and policies well beyond the framework of adjustment programmes. It is gratifying to see that the African Governments have made significant progress in several areas, particularly in the areas of macroeconomic reforms and governance. In fact, the progress in regard to Africa's development in recent years has been made possible by the determination of the African States to move forward on their part of the bargain enshrined in UN-NADAF. The African economies need to consolidate the gains from macroeconomic reforms that are essential for recovery and growth.

As against the efforts made by the African countries themselves, it is disheartening to see that the international community's contribution is none too inspiring. The international community has little to show on the promises it made to Africa, especially in the context of UN-NADAF.

Some palliative measures have been taken in the areas of debt trade preferences and export compensatory mechanisms. But these have clearly been insufficient, not only in relation to what needs to be done, but more disappointingly, in relation to the commitments that were solemnly made.

A key feature of UN-NADAF was the tangible goal of providing a minimum of net official development assistance of $30 billion in 1992, a figure that was to increase at an average rate of 4 per cent thereafter. This target remains unfulfilled. In fact, ironically, resource flows to Africa have declined since UN-NADAF was agreed upon.

My delegation supports the adoption of the draft resolution in document A/51/48 recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

My delegation is confident that, as in the past, the African States will continue to make all possible efforts to accomplish the goals of UN-NADAF. Let us not forget that the efforts of Africa alone will never be enough. Let us not succumb to the temptation to sermonize on what Africa needs to do further to help itself. Africa is fully aware of the challenges confronting it, and understands the solution to its problems. What Africa needs is enough resources to ensure the accomplishment of UN-NADAF's goals.

Given the magnitude of resources required for achieving these goals, it is imperative that the international community honour its commitment to Africa through concrete measures. Failure to do so will redound adversely not only on Africa, but on the international community as a whole. The international community should therefore rededicate itself to UN-NADAF, and respond positively and effectively to the needs of Africa before it is too late.

**Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla** (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), whose mid-term review focused the attention of the international community just a few weeks ago, is an issue to which my delegation attaches the highest importance.

The documents for this agenda item contain valuable information concerning the measures taken by the Governments of African countries and by the international community to attain the targets set in the programme. I wish particularly to refer to document A/51/228/Add.1, prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa, which mirrors that region's problems in their true magnitude and their daunting nature.

It is essential for this debate and whatever resolution we may adopt to help to prompt steps that will make it possible to relaunch the Agenda for the Development of Africa in the light of the results of the mid-term review. This will ultimately depend on the political resolve of each and every country, and particularly the developed countries, for which assistance to Africa is without question a matter of elementary historical justice.

Cuba also believes that the wealth extracted from that continent over centuries should now be returned to Africa by the affluent and comfortable societies that were in fact built using Africa's resources.

However, despite the efforts of African countries to make better use of official development assistance, the total volume of official development assistance in Africa has continued to fall from almost $25 billion in 1990 to less than $21 billion in 1993, a figure that is well below the objective of $30 billion set as the target in UN-NADAF and also far from the subsequent annual 4 per cent increase envisaged.

While there has been impressive growth in direct foreign investment in the developing countries overall, since the beginning of the 1990s less than 2 per cent of these flows have gone to Africa. The absolute figures are comparable only with those for 1985, when the economic crisis on that continent came to a head. Africa's share in world trade declined from 5 per cent in 1980 to 2.1 per cent in 1995. At a time when there is so much talk about globalization and its benefits and potential for all, there are many indicators that foreshadow a still marginalized Africa, where most countries will have been literally excluded from markets for goods and services, financial markets and capital and technological flows.

In spite of the hardships and wrenching efforts involved in the reform processes under way in some countries, savings and investment rates continue to be extremely low, terms of trade have worsened, the region's balance-of-payments deficit has increased and levels of external debt remain unsustainable. Millions of men, women and children live in despair and abject poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, 10 million AIDS sufferers have been identified, more than half of them women.

Africa's problems are of such magnitude that they demand special and extraordinary efforts. For this reason, we welcome the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa as a complement to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and as a framework for the cooperation of the whole of the United Nations system aiming at a genuine mobilization of the operational activities of the New Agenda for Africa. Similarly, we hail the recent initiatives and Conferences on African Development sponsored by Japan, as well as other steps taken by certain European countries.

At the same time, however much we may wish to do so, it would be premature to describe the isolated and not yet sustained indicators of economic growth in certain countries of the region as signs of "tangible progress", as does the report in document A/51/228. Such euphoria serves only to blind us to the destitution in which entire peoples are living.

With its modest economic and financial resources and in spite of the limitations inherent in its status as a small developing country, Cuba has provided and continues to provide significant cooperation and technical assistance to many African countries. Cuban teachers, doctors, engineers and technicians continue to make their contribution to the economic and social development of that continent without expecting the slightest material reward for their work. Tens of thousands of African students have also attended Cuban schools to study a wide variety of specialized subjects. I mention this in all humility simply to give a practical and tangible example to show that such efforts can succeed in the short term if there is a genuine will to do so.

Cuba is proud of its Afro-Hispanic origins and culture and wishes today to ratify its historical and abiding commitment to Africa.

**Ms. Valencia** (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to address this plenary meeting of the General Assembly on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on an issue of great importance to the Movement and developing countries: the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The adoption of the New Agenda in December 1991 reflected the United Nations recognition of the pressing need to make the question of Africa high priority for the decade. It also reflected the General Assembly's recognition of the profound economic and social crisis being experienced by the continent. It was considered a matter of urgency to create new mechanisms and indicate new directions to secure the required international support to deal with such a tragic situation.

The overwhelming burden of external debt, excessive dependence on a few commodities, rapid population growth, serious deterioration of nutritional indicators, environmental degradation — with the recurring problems of drought and desertification — social tensions and ongoing conflicts reveal only part of the grave consequences of increasing marginalization of African countries from the world economy. In Africa poverty and suffering have reached levels unknown in any other part of the world.

In the midst of such a complex situation, the African countries are deploying their own efforts to implement the New Agenda commitments. Economic reform policies, promotion of subregional and regional cooperation, agricultural development, promotion of appropriate environmental and demographic policies and encouragement of democratic processes are examples of those countries' efforts to face the challenges before them.

In many African countries the overwhelming burden of the external debt is such that resources that would otherwise be earmarked for meeting urgent social needs must be devoted to debt payments. The Non-Aligned Movement will therefore continue its actions to convince the international community, in particular the creditor countries and the multilateral financial institutions, to adopt an effective solution to the external debt problem.

We will also insist that priority should be given to the diversification of African economies, support for the regional and subregional integration programmes on the continent, the fulfilment of agreed targets for official development assistance and the effective implementation of commitments adopted at recent United Nations international conferences, in particular those relating to the critical situation in Africa.

Africa is a marvellous continent of enormous potential. We reaffirm our confidence in its peoples, its diversity, its wealth and its human resources. Let us support Africa's efforts to build its own future. The immense significance of this enterprise should be expressed through the clear resolve by the United Nations and the international community to fully implement the New Agenda. Solidarity is the hope of the peoples of Africa. Let us work to provide it.

**Mr. Mabilangan** (Philippines): The Philippine delegation congratulates Ambassador Owada, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), and to his country, Japan, for its concrete and specific contributions to the development of Africa.

We now have an assessment of the achievements of the first five years of the UN-NADAF, as well as concrete and specific recommendations for its full implementation.

It is gratifying to note that the African countries have exerted their best efforts to implement their part of UN-NADAF. Reform measures have been adopted to liberalize domestic prices and external trade. These countries have made monetary adjustments, and many of them have taken steps to improve public finance management. By and large, the countries of the continent have made laudable achievements in macroeconomic reform and governance.

Their efforts, in fact, have already had a positive impact on their economies, as summarized in the Secretary-General's report, submitted at the mid-term review. The international community should, however, temper its expectations because the tentative indications of growth recently shown by a number of these countries cannot yet be perceived as a pattern that can be sustained or emulated quickly by other African countries, particularly the least developed among them. The international community should not forget that Africa is the only region of the world to have suffered from a continuous economic decline since 1980.

The continent's inability to maximize the benefits from foreign trade and international financial flows cannot be allowed to persist if the international community sincerely expects the continent to realize sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

Africa's share in world exports fell from 2.9 per cent in 1990 to 2.2 per cent in 1994. Official development assistance has also fallen in real terms since

1990. The continent also carries a heavy burden of external indebtedness, principally official bilateral and multilateral debts.

It is evident that the international community has yet to implement fully its part of UN-NADAF. In one key area, the target of net official development assistance of $30 billion in 1992, with an increment of an annual average rate of 4 per cent in the years thereafter, was not met. Instead, it decreased. My delegation believes that the international community has the resources and capabilities adequately to support the full implementation of UN-NADAF. More than once in the not-so-distant past, the international community was able to demonstrate its ability to muster the required political will and resources that quickly changed the course of development of some groups of countries.

African countries have exerted their best efforts and continue to do so. But there must be an accompanying favourable external environment to enable their efforts to produce the required results. The external environment must be supportive of the identified critical interventions for African development and recovery in such areas as the diversification of their export products, intensification of regional integration, human resource development, the provision of adequate resource flows and durable solutions to their external debts.

Africa's continued reliance on a small number of export products has left it extremely vulnerable to the fast-changing market conditions of the world economy. Economic diversification is a compelling need for Africa.

It has been identified that economic cooperation and regional integration among these countries could be key to their development because, as with other successful regional cooperation, new markets are created. While efforts towards regional cooperation and integration must continue, we also believe that appropriate infrastructures must be provided to interconnect the African countries.

Human resource development has been shown in the experience of many countries to be a critical component of development. Invariably, without trained, healthy and productive men and women, economic growth and progress would be impossible. The continuing development crisis of Africa has seriously hampered its strides in human resources development. The recently issued human development report has confirmed this finding.

It is also disturbing that resources are flowing out of Africa when they might have been utilized in the continent. Africa's debts are a major obstacle to its ability to recover and develop. The international community is well aware of concrete proposals to address the unsustainable debts of Africa. Concrete action has to go beyond the Naples terms and any effective solution to multilateral debts must encompass a greater number of countries in the continent. Clearly, it is up to the international community to provide the appropriate response.

We in the developing world can easily feel the gravity of the situation in Africa, the difficult circumstances in the continent and the urgency for required action, because we see an Africa in many parts of our countries. There is much that we ourselves can do to contribute in a meaningful way to the implementation of UN-NADAF. Individually or through our collective efforts, we have implemented programmes and projects to enhance economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. South-South cooperation is becoming an important dimension for greater cooperation among developing countries and the mid-term review has recognized such a dimension of development cooperation.

My country, the Philippines, for instance, has implemented a small programme of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries funded by the national budget and a number of African countries have been beneficiaries of the various projects we have carried out in this regard. But South-South cooperation can at best provide a modest complement to the full efforts of the internationally community in seeing to it that adequate resources and other forms of support can flow to the continent and enable the African countries to participate fully in a globalizing and increasingly interdependent world.

**The Acting President**: In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly yesterday at its fiftieth plenary meeting, I now call on the Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

**Archbishop Martino** (Holy See): As it does in every discussion on development, the Holy See wishes to underscore the centrality of the human person. This centrality is enshrined in the first Principle of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development:

> "Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a

> healthy and productive life in harmony with nature." *(A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I), p. 3)*

In the discussion of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of African the 1990s, the community of nations must be willing to make this centrality a reality. The essential role that the human person plays in the formulation of a viable plan for action and development must forever go beyond the written page and debate and be put into practice.

In any consideration of an agenda for development in Africa, the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development merits greater attention. The Summit's Programme of Action identifies:

> "Enhancing positive interaction between environmental, economic and social policies [as] essential for success in the longer term" *(A/CONF.166/9, annex II, para. 2)*

and notes that this is to be done

> "with full respect for the various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of its people, and in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms." *(Ibid., annex I, para. 28)*

Since independence, African countries have turned to donor nations, often their former colonial rulers, and to international financial institutions for guidance and growth. The guidance seems to have become a kind of economic receivership. The policies of many African nations are decided in a cycle of meetings with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, donors and creditors.

Rates of growth in Africa have been questioned because they are low. These low rates have sometimes resulted in criticism and decreasing assistance. But the low rates can be clearly linked to such considerations as the fact that Africa receives only about 3 per cent of all foreign direct investment flows. However, Africa is no less capable of growth if given the levels of foreign direct investment that are found in countries with economies experiencing growth. The key to growth is granting producers and consumers the economic freedom to enjoy and respond to incentives and providing safety nets in necessary cases.

Foreign assistance for Africa is now being placed in question by some people. It is said to make little difference to growth and development in Africa. However, to get the economies of African countries charted towards more positive growth rates, aid levels should be made more generous, not reduced, for a period of time. Following a pre-announced sliding scale, certain basic areas should serve as categories for initial high levels of assistance. These areas, would include, among others, human capital — human beings using their skills — equipment and roads. Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Letter summarizing the conclusions of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, outlined further areas for which such prompt interventions and assistance are necessary. These include

> "malnutrition, the widespread deterioration in the standard of living, the insufficiency of means for educating the young, the lack of elementary health and social services with the resulting persistence of endemic diseases, the spread of the terrible scourge of AIDS, the heavy and often unbearable burden of international debt, [and] the horror of fratricidal wars fomented by unscrupulous arms trafficking, the shameful and pitiable spectacle of refugees and displaced persons". *(Ecclesia in Africa, No. 114)*

The very general areas of emphasis suggested here in targeting increased foreign aid should not allow the overflow of conditionality that is so common today and should be discontinued. This often reflects more on the weaknesses or preoccupations of the donors than on the true needs of the recipient country. It is the African people themselves who, committing themselves to

> "good administration of public affairs in the two interrelated areas of politics and the economy" *(Ecclesia in Africa, No. 110)*

should be allowed to foster development without the burden of excessive linkages and conditionalities too often found in aid packages.

Particular sensitivities are required when addressing the population questions of the African continent. As is well known, the discussion continues as to how population growth relates to development and the eradication of poverty. Specialists have not yet arrived at a conclusion in this regard, since their beliefs fall on both sides of the issue. But the documentation prepared on this item seems clearly to have decided in favour of population control policies and against strategies advocating development through poverty eradication. The great number of reservations that have surrounded this issue, both at the Conference on Population and

Development and subsequent conferences, demonstrate the lack of any true consensus in this regard.

In the documentation on this item, the critical issues section contains a subsection on human development and capacity-building composed of 12 paragraphs and subparagraphs. Six of these — one half of the total — refer to population issues, while only two are dedicated to education, and a single paragraph addresses employment. The potential of this valuable resource of the continent of Africa — Africans themselves — deserves more attention. One is challenged to consider the nature of the real agenda for this topic.

Lack of peace on the African continent has clearly diminished development. This is mostly evidenced in its impact on the African people themselves, particularly women and children. "An Agenda for Development" states that

> "Development is a fundamental human right. Development is the most secure basis for peace." (*A/48/935, para. 3*)

That message is echoed in the report of the Secretary-General that is being considered today, which states:

> "Sustainable development cannot occur without peace, which requires proactive efforts towards conflict prevention, management and resolution." (*A/51/228, para. 13*)

Peace, of course, is not easily guaranteed, especially since so many in Africa today suffer from ethnic and political strife. Once again, we turn to "An Agenda for Development", which states

> "While there is war, no State is securely at peace. While there is want, no people can achieve lasting development." (*A/48/935, para. 15*).

Only through the promotion of peace through social justice, respect for human rights, the building up of a State based on law and the fostering of authentic democracy will economic and social development occur in Africa.

I wish to conclude with the words of His Holiness Pope John Paul II upon his return from his eleventh pastoral visit to Africa:

> "How can one not be touched by the Africans' human warmth? How can one forget the colours, sounds and rhythms of that land? They are the dance of life, the triumph of life! Unfortunately, once again I have seen with my own eyes this continent's problems. Africa bears the scars of its long history of humiliations. This continent has too frequently been considered only for selfish interests. Today, Africa is asking to be loved and respected for what it is. It does not ask for compassion, it asks for solidarity."

There is hope for the people of Africa. May this discussion help to fuel that hope.

**The Acting President:** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX) of 11 October 1965, I now call on the Permanent Observer for the Organization of African Unity.

**Mr. Sy** (Organization of African Unity): I should like, at the beginning of this statement, to express on behalf of the Organization of African Unity warm congratulations to all members of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the effective and timely completion of the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). At the same time, I would personally like to commend the excellent coordination of the review exercise under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Hisashi Owada, the Permanent Representative of Japan.

The review exercise has once again demonstrated the spirit of partnership for development which has evolved in the United Nations over the years. The review was for the most part much more concerned with what has to be done in order to achieve the objectives established by UN-NADAF in 1991. There was a clear understanding of what African countries themselves have done since the adoption of the programme. The various political and economic reforms adopted by many African countries have started to produce positive results on economic growth and development in some countries and have laid the basis for sustainable economic growth and development in others. For some others in the continent, however, the problems of economic development remain very acute.

At the same time, the review exercise has acknowledged the commitment of the international community and the ongoing transformation of the international economy. The international community continues to show concern for Africa in all the major global programmes on the promotion of international

development, while the globalization and liberalization of the world economy tend to marginalize the economically weak countries.

As we approach the beginning of the next century, African countries, I must emphasize, continue to lay great store in the international community and in the relief which UN-NADAF could bring to their ailing economies. The consolidation of the gains made so far by many African countries will be difficult without greater commitment and support from the international community. All these points have been well articulated in the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee. However, while not attempting to restate these measures, permit me to underscore that the way forward in the implementation of the objectives of UN-NADAF and in the promotion of authentic development in Africa should include prioritizing development strategies.

One cardinal issue requiring urgent attention in the last phase of UN-NADAF is external trade. The international community should effectively support African efforts at trade facilitation and market access. The trading partners of African countries should consider further reduction in tariffs and the removal of non-tariff barriers on African products. This process should be complemented by adequate support for the diversification of African economies. In this regard, States participating in the African Development Fund of the African Development Bank would go a long way towards assisting trade expansion by making an initial, adequate special contribution to finance the preparatory phase of commodity diversification projects and programmes.

The promotion of sustainable economic growth and sustained development in African countries during the remaining lifespan of UN-NADAF may well hinge on the extent to which the question of resource flows is adequately addressed by the international community. The impact of the reforms and the present economic conditions of many African countries suggest that additional new resources are urgently needed. Attempts should be made by those countries which have not done so to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product in official development assistance to African countries. The international community should facilitate the flow of foreign direct investment to African countries, since most of the countries have made major improvements in the environment for investment.

At the same time, greater efforts should be made to relieve the debt burden of the indebted countries. While the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative is a step in the right direction, we would welcome substantial contributions to its fund by the creditor countries and international financial institutions. Also, the conditions governing whether countries can benefit from the initiative should not be too stringent so that the more indebted African countries can benefit from it.

In addition to this, I wish to underscore that regional economic integration remains, in the long run, a crucial strategy for promoting enduring development in the continent and a complement to national economic policies on economic growth and development. The African Economic Community is the foremost force for economic integration in the continent. The process of development in African countries would be further accelerated if the international community supported the work of the Community.

Allow me to say in conclusion that international development is a question of self-enlightenment. Poverty knows no boundaries. It generates immigration problems, provokes conflicts and has linkages with international terrorism. Africa has a potential market of more than 600 million people. The development of the continent would be to everyone's advantage.

**The Acting President**: We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this item.

At the request of several delegations, action on the draft resolution contained in section IV of document A/51/48 will be taken at a later date to be announced.

*The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.*